

for the tourists in Digha, Shankarpur and Mandarmoni beaches already famous tourist destination for North-eastern states.

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## 7. SIGHTING OF LEUCISM IN SPOT-BILLED DUCK *ANAS POECILORHYNCHA* J.R. FORESTER, 1781 AND LITTLE GREBE *TACHYBAPTUS RUFICOLLIS* (PALLAS, 1754) IN DISTRICT DUNGARPUR, RAJASTHAN, INDIA

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Leucism is an abnormal plumage; though uncommon it occurs occasionally in many species. While albinism is a genetic mutation that prevents the formation of the pigment melanin, leucism occurs when this pigment is diluted causing paler plumage that is often cream or sometimes white.

On February 04, 2009, a single individual of Spot-billed Duck with white plumage was sighted in the Gamela pond of Chhota Bodigama village, Dungarpur, Rajasthan. The entire body was white, except for the head (Fig. 1).

Spot-billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha* J.R. Forester, 1781, is a large-sized widespread resident duck found all over the Indian subcontinent (Ali and Ripley 2001, HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN TOGETHER WITH THOSE OF BANGLADESH, NEPAL, BHUTAN AND SRI LANKA. Oxford University

Press, Bombay). Normal individual of Spotbilled Duck has scaly-patterned buffy grey and dark brown plumage.



Fig. 1: Spot-billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha* with leucism

Likewise, on August 09, 2008, we sighted a single individual of Little Grebe with white upper parts and crown in the Gamela pond of Bankoda village in district Dungarpur, Rajasthan. The bird was prominent among the other grebes in the area.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* (Pallas, 1764) is a small, tailless, aquatic resident bird found all over the Indian subcontinent Ali and Ripley (2001). In normal individuals, the upper parts are dark brown with darker crown and sides of head, neck, and throat chestnut.



Fig. 2: Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* with leucism

## 8. STATUS OF WHITE-HEADED OR AUSTRALIAN STILT *HIMANTOPUS LEUCOCEPHALUS* IN SRI LANKA

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The White-headed Stilt (= Australian Stilt) *Himantopus leucocephalus* was first recorded from Sri Lanka by the second author on November 18, 1995 (De Silva 1996, 2000a). Since then there have been more records of the species from Sri Lanka (Table 1). All sightings are from the south-eastern quarter of Sri Lanka during the winter migratory season (i.e., approximately between mid-November and mid-April).

In general, the birds are solitary while in Sri Lanka, but there are a few reports of the White-headed Stilt being seen in the company of its congeners the nominate Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* - a common species in many Sri Lankan wetlands. On December 07, 2003, some

Black-winged Stilts were observed attacking and chasing a pair of White-headed Stilts (W. Kulasuriya pers. comm.). White-headed Stilts can easily be differentiated in the field from the Black-winged Stilts by their white heads and elongated black hindneck feathers, which form a sharply defined raised hindneck patch or ridge (De Silva 2002). A few Black-winged Stilts may occasionally have a dark hindneck but, even so, they can easily be separated from the White-headed Stilts, as their hindneck feathers are not elongated (i.e., they are of the same length as the other neck feathers), the dark hindneck patch is not sharply defined and the head is often suffused with grey (De Silva 2000b, 2002).

**Table 1:** Sightings of White-headed Stilt *Himantopus leucocephalus* from Sri Lanka

Date	Location	Observers/(Comments)
November 18, 1995	Bundala National Park	R.I. De Silva.
December 16, 1995	Bundala N.P.	P.T.G. Perera and R.I. De Silva.
January 07, 1996	Bundala N.P.	D. Perera and R.I. De Silva. (4 birds).
April 11, 1997	Bundala N.P.	A. Kirtisinghe and R.I. De Silva.
January 21, 1999	Palatupana	Dr. H.I.E. Katugaha.
December 05-08, 2003	Bundala N.P.	Prof. S.W. Kotagama, C.D. Kaluthota, Ms. Y. Karunaratne, N. Jayawardane, R. Amarasekera, I. Kaggoda Arachchi, and U. Wickremasinghe.
December 07, 2003	Bundala N.P.	W. Kulasuriya and U. Wijesena. (2 birds).
April 06, 2005	Bundala N.P.	Prof. S.W. Kotagama, M.G. Bellio, C.D. Kaluthota and S. Gamage.
November 12-15, 2005	Bundala N.P.	Prof. S.W. Kotagama, W. Kulasuriya, U. Wijesena, D.R.S. Illangakoon, D. Jayatilleke, M.S. Anver, S.M.N. Bulathwela, Ms. T. De Silva, N. Anurudda and J. De Silva.
March 04, 2007	Bundala N.P.	B.C.G. de Zylva.
March 21, 2007	Bundala N.P.	C.D. Kaluthota, K. Dayananda, H. Sathischandra and D.R. Vidanapathirana.
March 24, 2007	Bundala N.P.	R. Perera. (Photographic evidence provided).